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T H E

Innkeepers Opinion

now
done?

185

O F T H E

Triennial A C T.



L O N D O N :

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T H E

Innkeepers Opinion, &c.

T.  Eighbour, good Mor-
row ; did you hear
the News that came
last Night from Lon-
don ?

W. No. What was it ? good I
hope ; the King and Parliament agree
still, and then let the Devil do his worst ;
but what was it, pray ?

A 2

T. Why

T. Why, the worst that ever came to Town, for all you are so blith, since you and I kept House, and had Votes in this Corporation. Why, Man, the *Triennial Bill* is going to be taken off: And we may not have a New Parliament, for ought I know, above once in Seven Years.

W. Why truly Neighbour, that may be good or bad, for any Thing that I know; I have not so much as once thought of it; it will be, certainly, thereafter as it happens. But you and I remember the Time, when there was no *Triennial Act*, and, to my thinking, we did as well then, as we have done since, did we not?

T. No, certainly; and I wonder you can say so, you who are an Innholder as well as my self, and have gotten as much by it; and though we are of different Sides, yet both of us understand and know our Interest, and agree very well in minding
That.

That. And, as I believe we are both of our Brother's Mind of *Oxford*, that those are the freest Elections, where most Money is spent ; so you will certainly grant, that the oftner those free Elections return, the better it must needs be for such as you and I are ; ay, and by'r Lady, for such as sell any thing else, as well as Meat and Drink : You wot well what I mean. I do not see but that all the Burgeesses of the Corporation are concern'd as well as we, in the taking off this Act : For there are *dry Votes* to be purchased, as well as wet ones to be paid for. Now consider, whether the Circulation of Two Thousand Pounds, in such a Corporation as ours, once at least in Three Years, be not as good again, as the Circulation of the same Sum, once at most in Seven ; and I would fain know, whether there be any thing in the World so Good for the Nation, as the quick Circulation of Money. You see I don't consider my own Profit only,
but

but the Good of the Nation in General: And therefore shall such a Bill as this be taken off, which tends so much to the Profit of the Subject? I hope we shall all of us unite in this, which is our common Interest, to represent to our good Burgeſſes above, the Miſchief of ſtopping the Circulation of Money, the diſcouraging of Trade, and leſſening the Malt Tax, all which will certainly come to paſs, if the *Triennial Act* be taken off.

W. I am as ſenſible as you, Good Brother, that what you ſay, is very proper for *you* and *me* to ſay, and will appear very reaſonable, to all Men of *our Profeſſion*, and to all who are concern'd in giving Votes: But it is not, methinks, ſo proper to perſuade our Representatives, as you may imagine: Becauſe it is *their* Money which makes this notable Circulation, *their* Money which encourages our Towns Trade, and 'tis *they* who pay for the Conſumption of Malt, you talk of. If the
Towns

Towns were to bear the Charges of Elections, and should complain that a Parliament once in Three Years was too much for them, their Representatives would, I conceive, not Answer much to our Content, if they should tell us of the Benefits of Circulation of Money, a quick Trade, and a great Consumption of Malt; because we should find then, that it was *our own* Money that did all these fine Feats; and that, after the Election was over, there was not one Penny more in the Town, than there was before: A great Consumption indeed of Bread, and Meat, and Malt, and Wine, and Hay, and Oats, and other Things, but no Increase of Wealth to the Inhabitants. We may therefore talk of these Things, among ourselves, but they will signify little with our Representatives, who must certainly be glad to take off the *Triennial Act*, for the very Reason you would have it continued on, *i.e.* the spending so much Money: For he who
spends

spends a Thousand Pound every Third Year, to be Parliament Man, may save a Thousand Pounds in Seven Years, if that Act be repealed, and yet be a Parliament Man Seven Years together, if the King pleases.

T. But certainly, the Towns will never chuse those Gentlemen for Burgeses again, who are for repealing this *Triennial Act*.

W. What will the Towns get by that, if other Gentlemen will not spend more? We may make a Bluster, if we will, but undoubtedly he who bids most for us, shall have us. And if our Old Representatives are not the more disabled, by repealing this Act, (as I fancy they will not) I will venture the Odds on their Side. And therefore I am for letting Things go as they will, and make the best of what comes uppermost; it is but remembering when the next Election comes, that the Candidates are taking a *longer Lease*,
and

and therefore are to pay a greater
Fine.

T. Why, then belike you think we
had as good be quiet, and let things
take their Course. But, let me tell
you, there's another Inconveniency at-
tends the parting with this Bill, and
that is, we shall not have our Masters
in that Subjection and Dependance,
that we were used to have. You know
that for a Year before, and for some
Months after an Election, there was
no riding through the Town, without
calling upon some of us, and being
very Civil and Familiar with us; know-
ing us all by our Christian Names, sal-
uting our Wives, and Daughters, and
enquiring after our Sons, and a World
of other complaisant obliging Things,
besides the never examining or dispu-
ting our Reckonings; and now and
then, some of the Corporation got a
small Office, by their Interest. These
are things that please us hugely, and
these we are in great likelihood of
B losing,

losing, if this Act go off. For if Gentlemen find they have occasion for us but once in Six or Seven Years; you can't imagine how soon their Hats will grow to their Heads; how slow and unconcernedly they will ride, even under our Signs, and not call in, altho' our Daughters stood at the Gates, with their best Sarcenet Hoods on, and made them their best Court'sies.

W. Your Observations, Brother, are very right and true: But the worst of it is, they rather make against us, than for us, and will much help on, to the repealing of this Act. For, if there be nothing which the Gentlemen can less endure, or stomach more, than the Compliances, Caresses, Cringes, servile Condescensions, and unbeseeming Basenesses, which foolish, rude, and insolent mean People expect and require at their Hands, when an Election is coming on, you may be sure they will not miss an Opportunity of delivering themselves, as far as they well can,

can, from the Trouble, Shame, and Patience, these Things put them to. And therefore I can hardly think there are Ten Gentlemen in *England* who are not weary of securing their Elections, so frequently, by such poor and unworthy Meannesses, as they are put to. And therefore whatever Face, some People of Design, may set upon the matter; 'tis certain, that very few Men of Spirit, and Fashion, whether in the House or out of it, but are, in their Hearts, for taking away this Act. And what do you think can be its Fortune, when both the Profit and the Honour of the Gentry, are (secretly at least) engaged against it?

T. Why truly, if Gentlemens Practice, were conformable to their Reason, I should despair of preserving this Act. But I depend on what Men commonly *do*, more than on what they *think*. And I see that Emulation in the Country, and Hopes of rising, above, sometime or other, are generally too hard

for either the Profit or the Honour which you speak of; And they will spend beyond what they can spare, and readily submit, a Fortnight hence, to the Things which they heartily condemn to Day. You heard the Vicar as well as I, tell us last Sunday, that he was never Mistaken, less than Eighteen Times in Twenty; when he concluded that Men would act according to their Reason, Duty, and true Interest, against their Custom and Inclination. I thought it was a notable Sentence, and now it comes into my Mind, upon this Occasion, very fitly, and I build upon it. Therefore take Courage, and let us not be wanting to our selves; but I'm afraid you are not hearty in the Business.

W. It is one thing, Neighbour, to wish well to an Affair, and another to judge how it will go. I am still of the Opinion, that the Gentlemen will not overlook what makes so much for their Ease and Interest, as the repealing

ing this Act will do, if there be nothing more to say in its behalf, than what you have said. Besides, I have frequently heard several of the most considerate, sober, and substantial People of the Town, complain very heavily of the great Mischiefs these frequent Elections did, in occasioning such bitter Feuds, Quarrels, and fallings out, betwixt Relations, Friends, and Neighbours, who used to live in Peace and Quietness together, before this Act; and which they therefore wish'd had never pass'd; and yet there were some of them, who got well enough by Elections; but the Disturbances, the Riots, and the Revenges, they occasioned, were much an Overbalance for the Advantages they brought to them, and therefore they grow more and more inclinable to part with them.

T. Well, Neighbour, I am as much for Peace and Unity, as another, and you know, have been preaching up Forgiveness, Mercy, and forgetting old

old Injuries, for above this Year and Half; and if repealing of this Act, will lessen somewhat of my Gains, or Credit, why, I must bear it as well as I can, and be content like other Folks; we can't have every Thing we like, in such a World as this. My concern is mostly, God knows, for *the Poor Church*; if that were but once out of Danger, let the Act sink or swim, for old *Gains*. I can't have many Years to live, but methinks I should be glad to leave *the Church* in Safety, and Prosperity, according to the Multitude of Prayers which I have daily poured up, for that purpose, with every Company that are my Customers: But if this Act should fall, I know not what to think of it: My Correspondent at *London*, talks suspiciously and somewhat darkly about it; but he says he shall talk with Friends, and will send me word shortly, what we are to think, and speak, of it, in the Country.

W. Why,

W. Why, this is what I look'd for, all this while: I guessed that when there was nothing else to say, *the Church* must come in at last. But, Neighbour, why should you not trust to your own Reason, and Sense, and Observation, in judging whether the Church be in Danger or no, from the standing, or repealing, an Act of Parliament; but must have it from your Friends in *London*, and must be taught by them, what you must think, or speak? Is this to be a Man, or a Parrot? Why, at this rate, an *Eccho* has as good a Voice as you, and will give it with as much Judgment: That will say what you say; and you will say, what your Friends in *London* say; and they will say, what half a Dozen Seditious Clerks say, who are also bid to say so themselves, by a few designing and ambitious Lay-Directors; and that's the Circle of your Politicks. How comes the Church to be concern'd, whether a Parliament be called once in Three Years, or once

in Four, or Five, or Six, or Seven, as the King pleases? The *State* may be concerned in these Alterations of this kind, but what *the Church* has to do with them, I see not; but this I see, that the impertinent Use of that good Word, upon all Occasions, will, in some time, make it as Odious, as it is already Contemptible.

T. Not so fast, good Brother, not so fast: The Church may be more concern'd in this Act, than either you or I apprehend, at the present. For I remember they were good Churchmen who procured this Act to pass, and it was after many unsuccessful Attempts to do it. For, *Glorious Memory* did not like it, but withstood it long, and said the Nation, he was sure, would suffer by it, and repent of it: So did his Ministers; but God be thanked we got it at last; and their opposing it, made every Honest Man of our side, believe it was for the good of the Church. And if it was good for the Church, to pass

pass it, why should it not be for its good, to continue it on?

W. I agree with you, that they were the good Churchmen that opposed King *William* in all his great and good Designs, and that carried this Act against him, and his Ministry. But I do not agree, that whatever the good Churchmen did, or would do, was, or would be, for the Good of the Church; and methinks you should not endure to have that Cheat so often put upon you; as if no Churchmen could be either Fools or Knaves, Ignorant or Malicious, Deceivers or Deceived. The Churchmen had their Aims, in getting such an Act, for then they had a fair Chance of getting a Parliament, some Time or other, to their Purpose. Do but remember this plain Thing, that the good of the Church is not always the same Thing with the Good of Churchmen, and it will save you abundance of Mistakes, and Errors, and

C

Repent-

Repentance: And if I might be allowed to Preach in Politicks, I would venture to say, as the Vicar did before me, that he who shall conclude, that whatever the Churchmen design, is certainly for the Good of the Church, will never be mistaken less than Eighteen Times in Twenty. But after all, this Act has no Relation to the Church.

T. Nay, when I am satisfied the Church is not concern'd, I am easy; but why should not one Gentleman have his Turn, to serve his Country, as well as another? And how can that be, if Parliaments are not to be called frequently?

W. The Repealing this Act, will not hinder the King from calling Parliaments as often as he pleases.

T. Ay, but if this Act be Repealed, do you think the present Parliament will not be continued longer than the Time appointed for its Expiration? Answer me that directly.

W. I

W. I will so : For that, I dare say, is the Thing that you have been Driving at, and Meaning, all this while, but would not venture to come at it roundly. I am then, directly, of the Opinion, that if the *Triennial Act* be Repealed, the present Parliament will be continued longer than the Term appointed for its Expiration ; and I both hope and wish it may ; and that, I assure you without Jest, for the Good of the Church, as well as State ; because I think it means exceeding well to both ; and has done near as much to Settle and Establish both, upon a firm and lasting Bottom, as your good Friends had done, from 1710, to 1714, to Ruin and Destroy them both ; and I can say no better Thing of it, if I should study Twenty Years, for an Expression of my good Will towards it, and my good Wishes for its long Continuance.

T. Well now we are even again, Brother. I knew you would never have done, without a Fling at that good Parliament, that put an End to a Land-consuming-War, that took off Two Shillings in the Pound, and with whose Favour, Approbation and Concurrence, the late good Ministry were encouraged to make, and made that Peace that is so safe, so honourable and lasting, as you see: And which, for doing so, deserve to be Immortal.

W. Ay, now you have hit it indeed. But I agree with you, that they who made that Peace, deserve to be Immortal; and by the Grace of God, the Justice of the Nation, I hope, will shortly make them so. I do also agree with you, that without the Favour, Approbation and Concurrence of the Parties aforesaid, those Excellent Ministers of yours, could not have dared to do, what all the World was astonished to see done.

done. The Fruits of a long successful War, not lost by Chance or Negligence, but knowingly given up into the Enemies Hand! A Glorious Reign, setting in Infamy and Darkness: The Honour, Truth and Justice of a Religious Queen, given up as Things of no Value: The Credit, Trade and Safety of the Nation, never so much as thought of to any Purpose. What Prayers, Honours, and Rewards, are due, I marvel, to the Men, who favoured and approved, and who concurr'd in these Attempts, and great Performances? As mean as my Profession is, I would not change it, to have been the Head, or any active Member of that Assembly, that was to Shelter and Protect the Men, who were laying a Train to blow up the Kingdom. But what is this to the Purpose? I only want to know, what your wise Friends at *London* will order you to think and say, about the
 Repeal-

Repealing this Act, which was never intended to do any Good, nor ever did any by Accident, but has done a world of Mischief, and will certainly do much more; has Beggar'd a Thousand Gentlemen, Mortgaged as many more, made them corruptible, and capable of doing any Thing which the wickedest Ministers shall put them upon: Which has Debauched and Befotted an Hundred Thousand Sober, Honest Men, who lived by their Industry and Labour, and kept their poor Families; and in a word, has destroyed all Civil Conversation, Friendship, and good Neighbourhood, and almost all Religion; Love and Charity to one another.

T. I am not of the Preaching Kind, good Brother, but yet agree with you, in what you now say, as to the bad Effects of our frequent Elections. But do you think they will be remedied by the Repeal of this
Triennial

Triennial Act? Do you think we shall be then at Peace and Quiet with one another?

W. No, certainly; the Evil is too deeply rooted, to be quickly cured; the Mischiefs are too many, and too spreading, to be presently removed. But we shall do *something* towards it, we shall gain *some Respite* thereby, and the less Evil we endure, the better it will be for us: A *Quartan* Ague, gives the Patient Two Days Respite, a *Tertian* gives but One. A Gentleman can better afford to be at Charges once in Five or Seven Years, than once in Three; and the Peoples Bickerings, Oppositions and Revenges, will be less frequent, and their Wounds will have more Time to Close and Heal, against the next Onset.

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